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Short Description / Subject: A *BG News* feature profiling Dr. Gene W. Poor's work in visual communications technology, creativity-centered teaching, and animatronic character development.

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Prof Is Successful in Technical Arts – Feature Article (1982)

This 1982 *BG News* feature profiles Dr. Gene W. Poor, then a visual communications technology professor at Bowling Green State University. The article highlights Poor's belief in fostering creativity in his students, his philosophy of finding the "celebrity" within each student, and his approach to teaching in an engaging, enjoyable environment.

The piece also recounts Poor's journey from Ravenna High School teaching to joining BGSU's Industrial Arts Department, as well as his development of the visual communications technology program. A photograph on the page shows Poor standing with one of his most well-known early animatronic characters—robot Einstein—demonstrating the creative, technical, and theatrical work that shaped his career.

Digitized and preserved for educational and historical reference by Dr. Gene W. Poor, November 2025.

Newspaper feature profiling Dr. Gene W. Poor's teaching philosophy, creative impact, and early

Prof is successful in technical world

by Cathy Belfiore

4/29/1988

Somehow, everyone knows someone, who knows someone else, who knows someone famous. But fame does not always refer to celebrities and movie stars. There are several people at the University who could be considered famous just because of their abilities and successes.

Gene Poor is one of them.

Visual communications technology professor, Poor considers each one of his students special and unique. He encourages creativity in his classes to bring out the "celebrity" in each student. "Each one of us is a bit of every person we ever loved," Poor says. He adds that, "education is part show business and part mental seduction," and jokingly refers to campus as "the country club" with the Student Union being the "clubhouse."

He enjoys teaching in an environment is fun and enjoyable and in which he can share his experiences with his students. In 1985, he received a Faculty Excellence Award from the University Undergraduate Student Government Association for consistent and excellent skills in teaching and student counseling.

Ironically, after high school, Poor was one of the least likely to attend college. "My father owned a Pepsi plant. I was going to work for him," laughs Poor. "He fired me after one week!"

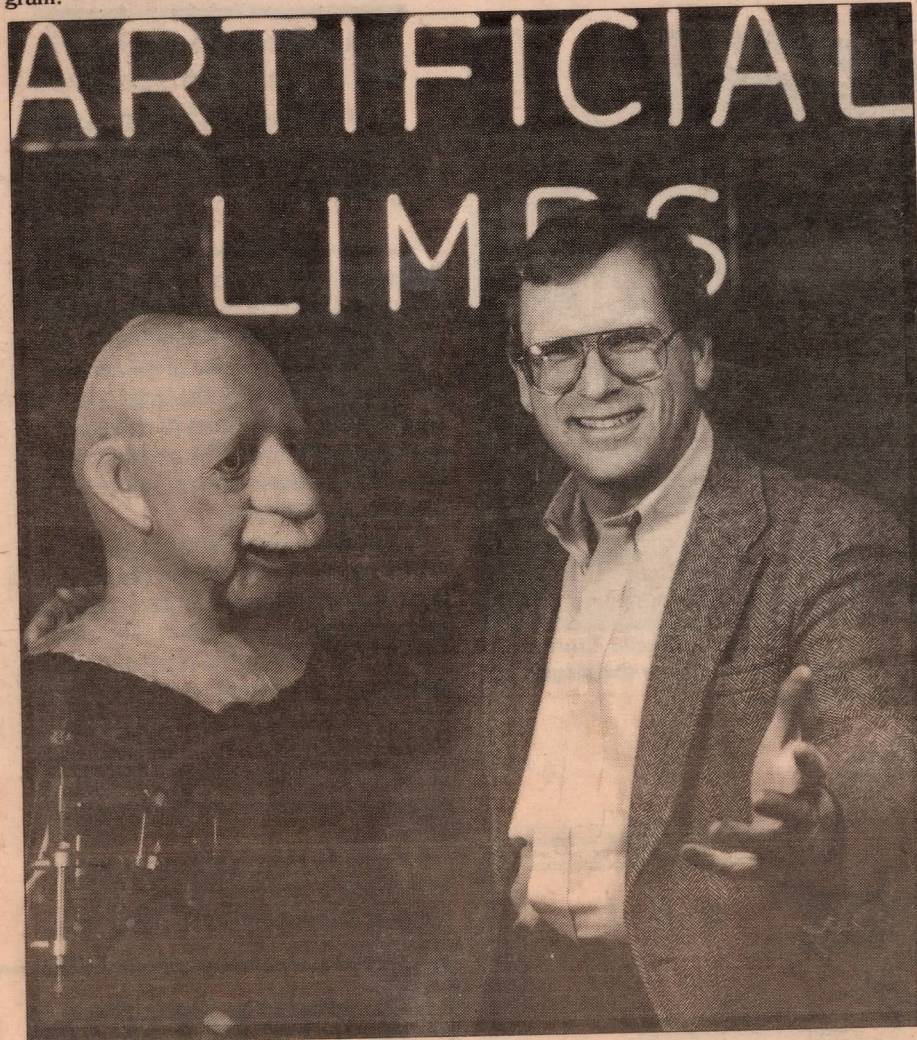
Poor was approached by a some former high school teachers who suggested he go to college and become a teacher. "I laughed at them," Poor said. "I told them that if they could get me in, I'd go."

But Poor received his B.A. in industrial education in 1966 and his M.E. in 1969, both from Kent State University.

He began his teaching career in 1966 at Ravenna High School in the Industrial

Arts Department, and joined the University in 1970 to begin working on his doctoral program. He studied with Dick Swanson who later offered him the job of developing a visual communications technology program.

This program prepares students to become what Poor calls "a gifted generalist" in communications technology and provides a choice of 21 occupational cluster specializations. Poor teaches courses in photography, video tape production and



Gene Poor, visual communications technology professor, is a master of many professions. He is showing his most popular robot Einstein.

film making, television, design and graphic communication, and career acquisition.

As an internship requirement for his doctoral studies, Poor worked for one month each with Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show," Fred Rogers of "Mr. Rogers" and Eastman Kodak.

For the Carson show, Poor recalls, "I called and asked to speak to the youngest guy on the staff. I introduced myself, told him what I was doing and asked him if I could come up and spend some time with them." Poor worked as the first unit manager for "Rare Tan Productions" coordinating facets for "The Tonight Show."

After completing a dissertation on Fred Rogers, Poor landed an internship where he worked with the writers of the show and was offered a job six months later. At Eastman Kodak he worked with the head of the Educational Marketing Services.

Besides teaching, Poor also develops and designs animatronics for a Toledo firm, Good Displays. He has created several robots used in trade shows and other commercial industries. His most popular robot, Einstein, has been adopted by the University as spokesperson for the University's programs.

As a consultant in creativity, motivation and organizational communication, Poor works for several large businesses analyzing what they believe their employees need to know and then developing training programs for them.

Poor is also the author of numerous publications in academic journals, former owner and designer of the restaurant "The Parrot and the Peacock" (currently The Soft Rock Cafe), and is a member of the American and Ohio Industrial Arts Associations and the American and Ohio Councils in Industrial Arts Teacher Education.